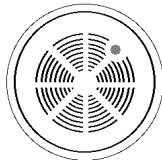




IN WISCONSIN  
IT'S THE LAW



Wisconsin law now requires every home and residential building to be protected by smoke detectors. Owners must install and maintain them and tenants must inform the owner of any detector problems. Additional detector requirements apply to group homes, high rise buildings, mixed use and health care occupancies. For more details, call the Building Inspection Department or Fire Department. Failure to comply may subject you to legal penalties.

### Why are smoke detectors necessary?

Women and children are the greatest victims in fires. Fire kills more children in the U.S. than any other disease or natural disaster. Working smoke detectors double your chances of surviving a fire. They have the secondary effect of protecting your property.

### What kind of detectors are required?

All detectors must be listed smoke detectors, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Ionization or photo-electric types will detect smoke. (Heat detectors, which respond slower, may only be used in addition to smoke detectors.) For multi-family housing (3 or more living units) built prior to January, 1982, and all one- and two-family dwellings, the detectors may be self-contained battery-operated smoke detectors. In newer multi-family housing, the detectors, except within living units, must be permanently wired to an unswitched electrical circuit and interconnected with the fire alarm system.

It is *recommended* that all smoke detectors be interconnected and powered by both house current and batteries to ensure audible operation in all situations.

### How many and where must they be installed?

**FOR ONE AND TWO FAMILY HOMES**, the owner must install at least one smoke detector on each floor level of each unit, including the basement and any finished attic. It is suggested that they first be placed between each sleeping area and the rest of the house, and then near the ceiling of each stairway on each floor level.

**FOR APARTMENTS AND MULTI-FAMILY HOMES**, the owner must install at least one detector:

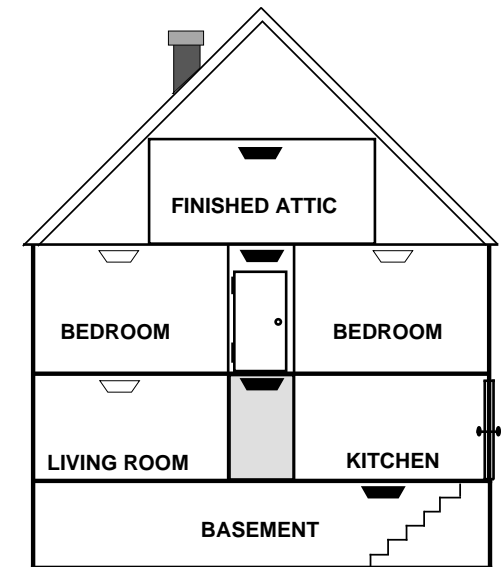
- in the basement
- at the head of open stairs at each floor level
- at the door leading to enclosed stairs at each floor level
- within 6 feet of each living unit's sleeping area. Do not install any smoke detector in the kitchen. In long hallways serving bedrooms, manufacturers usually require a detector every 30 feet. If individual living units occupy several levels, it is recommended that detectors be placed on every floor level. It is also recommended that smoke detectors be installed in each bedroom if their doors are kept closed.

### How should they be installed?

They should be installed per the manufacturer's instructions. Typical requirements for detectors include:

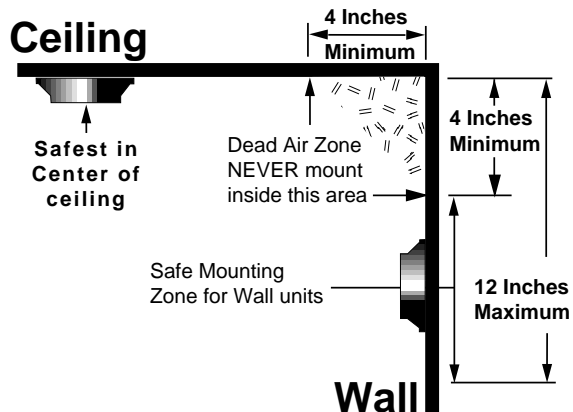
- Mounting on the bottom of exposed basement ceiling joists.
- If mounted on the ceiling, then at least 4 inches from the wall.

- If mounted on a wall, then between 4 to 12 inches from the ceiling. (There is usually a dead air space where the ceiling and wall meet.)
- Mounting within 3 feet of the highest part of any peaked or sloped ceiling.
- At least 3 feet away from any window, door or air conditioner where drafts could prevent smoke from reaching the detector.
- Away from kitchens where cooking could cause false alarms and subsequent disconnection. It is recommended that smoke detectors with a temporary reduced-sensitivity switch be installed near kitchens.
- Do not install detectors in areas of temperature extremes, excess humidity or heavy dust, such as in bathrooms, unheated garages or closed attics.



▀ Required Detectors

▱ Recommended Detectors



### What maintenance is required?

In actual fires, over one-third of the detectors in the same room as the fire did not operate. Proper maintenance will help your detector protect you. Be sure to:

- Change batteries at least once a year or more often if the low battery warning activates. Follow manufacturer's specifications for brand and battery type. Not ALL 9 volt batteries fit in ALL smoke detectors. Look for battery brand and type inside or on the bottom of the detector.
- Change any bulbs when the trouble indicator activates.
- Test the unit weekly by using the test button, or as required by the manufacturer. If it doesn't work, put in a new battery. If it still doesn't work, then replace the detector with another until it can be repaired. Testing with actual smoke, as from an extinguished candle, is the best method.
- Open the cover and vacuum the unit yearly.
- If you've lost the detector instructions, there will be some basic information, including the manufacturer's address, on the detector itself.

### Is there anything else?

Landlords should inform tenants in writing of the smoke detector maintenance requirements. Tenants are responsible for maintaining the smoke detectors in their dwelling units. Landlords are responsible for maintaining smoke detectors in all public areas. Tenants are responsible for informing their landlords in writing of any smoke detector problems, such as a dead battery, in their apartment. The landlord has five days from receipt of the notice to correct the problem. If a landlord has a problem with a tenant or vice versa regarding these requirements, **call Building Inspection at 286-3646** to make a complaint.

Buildings with Commercial and Residential uses should consult the Commercial Inspection section for advice on required detectors. Call 286-3874.

It is recommended that you replace batteries on a set date each year, such as your birthday, lease renewal date or National Fire Prevention Week each October, and then mark the battery with its installation date. It is recommended that tamper-resistant detectors, or preferably, house current powered detectors be installed if there is a problem with battery removal or disconnection.

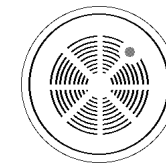
It's still up to you to have an adequate escape plan. You should have at least two ways to escape from a fire and an outside meeting location for everyone in the household, then contact the fire department. Also, smoke detectors are not a replacement for fire prevention. Look at your property for sources of fires and eliminate or reduce them.

So check it tonight! Your home's smoke detector and those in any rental properties need to work in order to protect life and property. And besides...



IT's The LAW.

Smoke Detectors  
SAVE LIVES



## SMOKE DETECTORS

NOW  
YOU  
NEED  
MORE  
THAN  
JUST  
ONE!